Belmont Chronicle.

THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 1888.

A POWER OF THE AIR.

In these latter days, with all our scientific knowledge and mechanical appliances, it is wonderful how little we really know about some of the familiar forces that, unseen, surround us. Of all things in nature, electricity is perhaps the most mysterious.

Within us and around us, permeating all matter, this force, or fluid, or whatever name may be applied to it, is ever present—not stationary or in fixed quantity, but continually varying, as restless waves of the sea. It is only in times of unusual electrical commotion that they become perceptible to the senses, as, for instance, when the aurora is visible in the heavens, when St. Elmo's fires are glowing, or during a thunderstorm.

St. Elmo's fire is a peculiar but, at sea, not unfamiliar phenomenon; and although it chiefly occurs during thunderstorms, it is itself in no way dangerous. It always appears at the apex of lofty, tapering objects, resembling a flame of fire rising out of them. It may sometimes be seen at the tops of trees, but more frequently on the masts or yard-arms of ships at sea. It is nothing more than a harmless discharge of eletricity.

But atmospheric electricity assumes its most impressive aspect when it appears in the lightning flash. An earthquake excites only a feeling of terror; but while a thunderstorm has its terrors, it has also its fascinations. When "heaven's artillery" plays, we cannot but be impressed with a sense of our own littleness and helplessness, and touched with a feeling of fear.

There are three kinds of lightning—forked or zigzag lightning, sheet lightning, and globular lightning. Lightning is a discharge of electricity between two clouds, or between clouds and the earth. Fortunately for us, most of the lightning passess from cloud to cloud.

The position of greatest peril from lightning is under isolated, unprotected objects, such as trees, though a position from the tree, at a distance of the height of the tree, is considered safe. It is not desirable to sit before a fire in the room during a thunderstorm, the soot and heated air in the chimney acting as conductors. Generally speaking, there is perhaps less danger from lightning in towns than elsewhere, the numerous protectors erected on chimney stalks and church steeples providing some measure of safety.

A lightning-conductor affords protection to a space around the diameter of which is four times its height. But great care is necessary in erecting such conductors; they must be continuous, that is to say, they must have no bad joints. It is also essential they should have proper connection with the earth; merely dipping the wires into the ground will not do. Under-ground water-mains make good earth connections. Where these are available, an earth-plate of sheet-copper, three feet by three feet, and an eighth of an inch thick, should be buried in wet earth, surrounded with coke. But no work of this description should be undertaken without skilled supervision.

Every one is familiar with the fact that lightning does not spring direct from cloud to cloud, or to the earth, but pursues a zigzag course. This is due to the fact that the air is not equally humid throughout.

Electricity always takes the path which offers least resistance to its passage.—Damp air is a better conducting medium than dry air; consequently, the lightning selects the dampest route, avoiding the drier strata and zones it encounters, and advances, now directly, now obliquely, until it reaches the opposite cloud, where it subdivides into a number of forks.

Owing to the resistance it encounters in its path, intense heat is generated, which causes the air to expand. Immediately after the flash, the air again contracts with great violence and with a loud report, which is echoed and re-echoed among the clouds.

The report reaching the ear of the listener from varying distances, is drawn out into a series, and, being still further prolonged by the echoes, the roll of the thunder is produced. It is a curious fact that, although the sound of thunder is exceedingly loud when heard near at hand, the area over which it is audible is comparatively circumscribed.

The noise of a cannonade will be heard, under favorable conditions, at a distance of nearly a hundred miles, while the sound of thunder does not travel over fifteen miles. The occurrence of the thunder and the lightning is, of course, simultaneous; but as light travels faster than sound—its passage is practically instantaneous—the flash may be seen several seconds before the thunder is heard.

The distance of thunder may thus be approximately estimated, an interval of five seconds between the flash and the thunder-clap being allowed to the mile.

Sheet lightning has the appearance of a sheet of flame momentarily illuminating part of the sky or cloud-surface. It is, in reality, but the reflection of lightning flashing beyond the horizon or behind the clouds, and at too great a distance for the thunder to be audible.

But the most remarkable of all the manifestations of electricity is globular lightning, in appearance like a ball of fire moving leisurely along, and remaining visible, it may be, several minutes.

BILL NYE AND THE BLIZZARD.

Bill Nye in Buffalo News.

As you may have heard incidentally, we have had rather a backward spring in New York, and even on Wall street it has been pretty hard on stock. I am not startled, for I have seen blizzards which made this look like the Fourth of July. It makes some folks very mad to hear me sneer at the blizzard, but as Heaven is my judge this was a lawn festival and moonlight excursion compared with a half dozen storms that I remember. It is, of course, a novel experience for New York, and it is my chief joy to see the city enter into the hearty appreciation of it. Of course it is annoying to some extent. But the suffering made me smile. Several people have used condensed milk as a hardship, and found it a good deal better than the milk they got heretofore, and in other ways there has been a good deal of similar suffering. Poor people always suffer, and they have improved this opportunity.

With the aid we have received from Dakota, we are all right. The wealthy grasshopper sufferers of Kansas and Nebraska have also responded manfully. Rheumatic remedies and low proof rum have come from every quarter, and if you will come over here in June, you will find us quite hopeful.

THAT is not the best sermon that makes the hearers go away talking to one another and praising the speaker; but that which makes them go away thoughtful and serious, and hastening to be alone.

NEXT Monday is Election day.

OUR SPARE ROOM.

For some time after we had been married we lived at Finchley.

Finchley is not a particularly interesting place in itself. It is not a town; neither by the utmost stretch of imagination could it be called country. It is exceedingly difficult to get to the city—where I go every day—from there, or get anywhere else, for the matter of that. But I think our chief reason for going to live there was that we had the chance of taking a house that had been built by a friend of mine for his own occupation, who found after it was finished that he would have to live abroad for two or three years. Houses that people build for themselves are always so much nicer than those they build for other people. So we at once decided to take it, and ever since have been trying to get away from it.

We both wanted to live in town, in London proper. I wanted my club handy, and Margaret wanted the bonnet shops. Choosing a new house is a weighty and important matter, and we braced our minds beforehand by many conversations on the subject, and at last began seriously to house-hunt.

We looked at a good many "desirable residences" in the regions of South Kensington and Baywater, and saw a few that we liked pretty well, and a large number we did not like at all. A good many of the houses had just been newly and smartly done up for the season—it was the month of February when we began our search—with an evident view of attracting the public. But although they were magnificent with paint, paper, whitewash and Jacobean mantelpieces, we frequently found that they were deficient in the less apparent details of drainage, cisterns and boilers, with which unimportant trifles the landlord had evidently considered it not worth while to busy himself.

Some houses, on the other hand, were not "done up" in any way, but were dark, dirty, and cobwebby, and haunted by cadaverous caretakers. It was useless to try and investigate any of this species, as Margaret refused to go any further than the drawing-room floor, and would not entertain the idea of them for a single instant. "First impressions are everything," she would remark emphatically when I tried to convince her that painting and papering were not yet lost arts, and that the caretaker would not, of necessity, form part of our establishment.

Our house-hunting, was, therefore, a long business, and we made quite a picnic of it, Margaret declared, for we frequently retired to a confectioner's for afternoon tea instead of going back to Finchley for that meal, which was always a great point with Margaret. She would not have thought the day complete without it. So as the afternoons at the end of February are long and light we frequently walked about looking at the houses till nearly 6 o'clock.

One evening as were sitting together in my smoking-room after dinner talking, as we usually did, about our prospective new house, Margaret seemed suddenly to be struck with an idea.

"Charley," she said, leaning forward in her chair and placing her pretty forefinger on her pointed chin as she spoke, "there is one thing that our new house must not have, and that thing is a spare room."

"No spare room!" I cried, nearly dropping the end of my cigar in surprise. "Why, where shall we keep all our boxes, my dear; and your sewing machine, which you never use, and——"

"I mean spare bedroom," interrupted Margaret reprovingly. "And I wish you wouldn't say 'my dear,' it makes me feel so old."

"Old!" I said, astonished and mystified.

"Yes," returned Margaret. Mr. Whitelock calls his wife 'My dear,' and they both are over seventy!"

This argument was unanswerable. I did not attempt to refute it.

"Well, then," I continued, "My—my love" ("Ah! that's better," said my wife) "would you mind explaining to me your objections to that time-honored institution, a guest chamber? Are you afraid of a ghost taking up its quarters with us?"

"No," answered Margaret, still keeping her finger on her chin and regarding me with a fixed and steadfast gaze. She had not even blanched when I alluded to the sewing machine. "But in London, he who keeps a spare room keeps a hotel."

It was too true. I dropped the end of my cigar into the grate outright, Aunt Georgina from Leamington, "just running up from Saturday till Monday," with her maid, her asthmatic pug, and her array of imperials, coursed through my brain.

Aunt Georgina—she was Margaret's aunt not mine—had frequently performed this athletic feat since our marriage, and we had soon found out that her "Saturday till Monday" was not by any means the same as that period of time recorded in the almanacs. It was sometimes a week, but more often ten days, and it had been known to extend itself to a month. I do not think we either of us absolutely disliked Aunt Georgina. In fact, if any one had asked us what we particularly objected to in her, we should have been somewhat puzzled to reply; but she was like a rich plum pudding—a little of her went a good way.

They say that everything comes to those who wait. Still more does everything come to those who search long and diligently enough, and in due time our house was found. It was in every way satisfactory. It had been freshly done up with paint, paper and the newest things in mantelpieces and dados, and a proper attention had been paid to such things as drainage, gas pipes and boilers. It was in the Bayswater direction; it was close to an omnibus route; it was only a shilling cab fare distance to my club, and there was a very tolerable bonnet shop not far off. In fact, Margaret said that by putting her head out of the bath-room window and craning her neck only a very little she could just catch a glimpse of it.

But in this world of ours, unfortunately, there is no rose without a thorn; no supreme good without some drawback. Our house had a spare room.

To be sure, as Margaret observed when we talked this over after quite settling upon the house, we might have known that we *must* have a spare room, as there were only our two selves, the servants and a very limited assortment of boxes and trunks to stow away. "And you know you wouldn't live in a *very* small house, Charley," she added, "even if we could have found one in this part of London."

I assented to this.

"Anyway," continued my wife, "I shall not furnish the room as a bedroom."

"Well, that was the original idea," I replied.

At last we were settled in our new house. I will not attempt to describe our removal and subsequent establishing of ourselves and our furniture. It was not pleasant to go through the experience and it is not pleasant to recall it. I think Margaret and I came as near having a quarrel as we ever did in our lives at that time. A confused dream of bedsteads and sideboards in the drawing-room, wardrobes in the dining-room, Dresden china and mirrors in the kitchen, Maple's men and strange cats everywhere, tinned-beef dinners and general all-pervading atmosphere of straw.

But at last it was all over and Margaret triumphantly declared that the house looked as if we had lived in it for years. I thought it rather a dubious compliment, but I did not tell her so.

One morning, as we were sitting at breakfast, a letter was brought in and handed to my wife. "The postman is late this morning," she said, as she took it. I said nothing; I had caught a glimpse of the handwriting and a huge golden monogram on the envelope. It was from Aunt Georgina.

I laid down my knife and fork and looked blankly across the table at Margaret, who looked blanker still. She had just spread a piece of toast with marmalade—although she was in the middle of eating an egg—in sheer desperation and self-abandonment.

"I can't read it," she said presently, tossing the letter across to me. "It looks as if she had written it with her left hand and her eyes shut."

I deciphered its contents with some difficulty, and then read it aloud to Margaret. It ran as follows:

MY DEAR MAGGIE ("I wish she wouldn't call you Maggie," I said; So I hear you are established in a new town house. I think of running up next Saturday till Monday, just for change of air for myself and Boulotte (Boulotte was her pug), and to have a "peep at the fashions" between Saturday afternoon and Monday morning. May I occupy your spare room? Of course you have a spare room. I know the delightful plan of all London houses. All news when we meet.

Your affectionate AUNT GEORGINA.

To-day was Monday; she had not given us a long notice of her coming.

"To think of her trying to make us believe that she is really only coming from Saturday to Monday," said Margaret, scornfully. "I don't quite see how she could 'peep at the fashions' between Saturday afternoon and Monday morning, unless she means she is going to study the bonnets in church."

"Well," I said, dividing my morning paper into two, and giving Margaret the part with the births, deaths and marriages, which she always likes to see; "it's awkward her wishing to come just as we have decided not to have a spare room, but we can easily write and say we haven't one."

"No," said Margaret, shaking her head sagely, "that would never do. In the first place, she would be very much offended, and she mustn't be offended, for you know, Charles, I have some expectations from her—though it is not much." That was very true. "Then," she continued, "our not having her to stay in this house will not prevent her coming up to town. She will walk in on us directly she arrives—Saturday afternoon, very probably. She will, of course, expect to be shown all over the house; and it will strike her as rather peculiar why we have left our large front bedroom on the third floor empty. You know the horrid way she always notices everything. She will bear down on me with an avalanche of questions, and probably get everything out of me before I know where I am. What we must do is must turn that room into some other kind of room—not a bedroom," she continued vaguely.

It was time for me to go to the city, so we did not discuss the matter any more just then.

As I have said, this was Monday, and by Wednesday evening we had not come to any decision about our spare room. But Margaret had written a polite, though, I am afraid, rather hypocritical note to Aunt Georgina, saying that unfortunately we possessed no spare bedroom, and entreating her to take up her quarters at the Paddington Hotel and give us as much of her society as was possible.

On Wednesday evening we began seriously to discuss our spare room; time was getting short. Margaret could suggest nothing but a picture gallery or a private chapel; but as we had no pictures worth speaking of and there was a church in the next street, the suggestion could hardly be called a good one; and my idea of turning the room into a kitchen—as the sanitary-dwelling folk tell one that the kitchen should always be at the top of the house—was received by Margaret with scorn and contumely.

"Fancy one's dinner coming down to one instead of up," she said; "how dreadful it would be. I'm sure I should never be able to eat a morsel."

"I don't quite see the objection," I replied mildly, "unless you think it would be a come-down; and, in any case, your dinner must go down when you eat it, you know."

Margaret took no notice of this remark. It is always a point of honor with her not to see any of my jokes when they are at her expense. She did not even smile.

"It would be horrible," she went on. "I should feel that the next thing would be I should have to wear divided skirts and stockings with toes to them."

"I thought stockings always had toes," I said, but Margaret vouchsafed me no reply, not condescending to inform me that she referred to Dr. Jaeger's new system, where toes of the stockings are separated like the fingers in the glove.

The next day, as I was sitting in my office, a brilliant idea suddenly rushed post-haste into my mind. It was so brilliant, and also I felt that the time was getting on so fast, that I decided to go home at once and communicate it to Margaret. I was rather proud of it, for as a rule I do not have so many brilliant ideas as she has. Therefore I at once left the office, although it was only 3:30 o'clock, and hailing the first respectable looking hansom that I could see, drove rapidly home.

I dashed upstairs into the drawing-room, where Margaret was sitting.

"Oh, Charley!" she cried; "how you startled me. I was altering a dress, and I thought you were a caller." And she pulled out her paraphernalia from under the sofa, where she had hastily huddled it.

"Margaret," I cried, "I have an idea!"

"What!" she said, and looked as astonished as if I had said I had got a megalosaurus in my pocket.

"I have an idea about the spare room," I gasped, for I was very much out of breath with my rapid ascent up the stairs. "We will—make it—into—a billiard-room." And I sank into an armchair. "Get on your hat and we will go out and order a billiard table at once."

"A billiard-room! Of course! the very thing!" ejaculated my wife. "Why didn't we, either of us, think of such a thing before?" I was not quite so sure about the simplicity of it—as regarded the cost, at any rate.

When Margaret had got her hat and I had recovered my breath we sallied forth, my wife perpetually wondering all the way into Oxford street why we had not thought of such a simple thing before. "Besides," she said, "only think of the cheapness of furnishing a billiard-room. Why, you absolutely want nothing except the table and a few seats."

"A carpet, though, would rather improve the appearance of the room, would it not?" I ventured to put in.

"Well, yes; but a carpet is not furniture."

I was silent, but did not feel so thoroughly convinced of the cheapness of the arrangement. The cost was certainly the least brilliant part of my idea, I could not help thinking.

Before we went home to tea that afternoon we had ordered a square of Turkey carpet, a capital second-hand, full-sized billiard table and a few leather-covered seats to put around the room. The carpet was to be made a fixture the next day; there was no difficulty about that part of the business; but the table and seats could not be sent until Saturday morning.

It was running things pretty close!—Suppose Aunt Georgina and the billiard table were to make their entry into the house at the same time? We were not a stone's throw from the Great Western Hotel, and she was sure to come round directly she arrived—she was one of those people who must air their tongues.

But no! On second thoughts, such a horrible rencontre would be unlikely.—Saturday is only a half-day, and the men would be sure to want to get their work over early. It was also extremely improbable that Aunt Georgina would arrive before the afternoon. Still, in spite of all of this, we both felt a little nervous, and we talked a good deal about it at dinner, and afterwards when we retired to my little snuggery of a smoking-room, opposite the dining-room.

About 9 o'clock we heard the postman's knock, and Margaret flew to get the letters. She brought back a postal card from Aunt Georgina and we nearly tore it in two with both trying to read it at the same time, though there was not much to read. "I shall arrive to-morrow morning at the G. W. Hotel, and shall look in upon you some time in the afternoon," was all the informetion it gave us.

I drew a long breath of relief.

"By Jove! What a blessing!" I said. "By the time she arrives here, our spare room will be a full-fledged business-like looking billiard-room, and she will suspect nothing."

I am sure both slept better that night than we had all that week.

Directly breakfast was over the next morning we began to expect our men. I had taken a whole holiday—or I should say a half one as I always come home early Saturdays—in honor of the billiard table and Aunt Georgina. When 10 o'clock struck Margaret affirmed it as her opinion that the men were not coming at all. I tried to disabuse her of this idea. But when 11 and 12 had struck and still there was no signs of them I began to be alarmed myself, and Margaret walked up and down between the back and front drawing-rooms like a bear in a cage or a tragedy actress rehearsing her scene.

I had just gone to my study for a newspaper, when, half-way down the stairs, I heard a shriek from Margaret. I hurried back at once. She was standing by the window. "Come! Come!" was all that she could say.

"What is it?" I cried, rushing to the window. "The billiard table?"

Alas! it was no such vision of bliss.—A four-wheeled cab had just drawn up at our door, from the window of which was seen protruding the crumpled black face of a pug and a huge nosegay of flowers.

"Perhaps it is some one come to the wrong house," I said faintly, catching at a straw. But the next moment this straw was swept away from me as a stout, fair lady in a towering floral bonnet, stepped gingerly out of the vehicle, pug in one hand and flowers in the other. It was no optical delusion. It was Aunt Georgina.

In another minute she would be in the drawing-room. What were we to do? Margaret, however, did not lose her presence of mind even in this unlooked-for and awful crisis. In all the five years of our married life I have never known it to desert her.

"Now, Charley," she said emphatically, "what we have to do is to occupy her and keep her in this room till the billiard table arrives." She looked pale, but dauntless, and I felt my courage rising by force of example.

"Supposing the table doesn't come at all?" I could not help suggesting, dismally.

"It's sure to come," she said, catching her breath; "and try not to look as if anything was the matter."

"Well, and here I am, you see!" cried a high-pitched voice. And Aunt Georgina sailed in to the room, pug dog, flowers and all, diffusing an overpowering odor of patchouly about her. "I thought you wouldn't mind my dropping in to lunch." (What a lucky thing this isn't the Palace of Truth, I thought to myself.) "I really couldn't wait any longer to see my dear Maggie." (Here she rapturously kissed my wife.) "Besides," she added candidly, "they had nothing I cared to eat at the hotel; so I left Hawkins there with my luggage and came on to you straight. I've brought you some flowers out of my garden. Of course I know London florists are perfection, but, after all, there's nothing like the real article."

One might have supposed from Aunt Georgina's speech that London florists were in the habit of supplying their customers with artificial blooms. We both murmured our thanks and our delight at her premature appearance, while I stooped down and patted the pug's broad back by way of conciliating its mistress.

"Ah, isn't she a dear creature?" cried Aunt Georgina, seizing her in her arms to kiss her. "You're a beauty, aren't you, my lovey-dovey?"

The lovey-dovey snorted and wheezed so apoplectically, in answer to this endearing squeeze, that it seemed as if it would never be able to get its breath again. So Aunt Georgina deposited her on a velvet-covered armchair, while she went round the drawing-room with Margaret's arm locked in hers, her gold double eye-glass up, exclaiming at and admiring by turns overything she saw, while I followed in their wake, trying not to look as nervous as I felt.

Suddenly, in one of the few and distant pauses in Aunt Georgina's conversation, or rather monologue, I again heard the sound of wheels stopping at our door; very heavy wheels this time. By ill-luck she was just nearing the front windows, after having made the tour of the room. At once her gold eye-glass was up in its place.

"Well, I declare!" she exclaimed.—"That huge thing looks as if it were stopping at your door. You don't mean to say you've been buying a grand piano, you extravagant children!"

It was the billiard table!

I looked at my wife, feeling as if my heart, and, indeed, the whole of my inside, were slowly but surely sinking down into my shoes. I wished the earth would open and swallow me up. But the earth, which is seldom as complaisant as one would desire under such circumstances, refused to budge.

Margaret was clasping her hands behind Aunt Georgina's brown silk back. In another moment I felt all would be lost; when all of a sudden, in the back drawing-room, arose an unearthly howling and screeching. Margaret's Persian cat had just strolled lazily into the room, in search of a peculiar armchair which she loved, when she was roughly accosted almost on the threshold by Bonlotte, who, though somewhat averse to attacking her species, was not particularly afraid of a cat. But Mrs. Fluff, not appreciating the fun of the thing, boxed her ears soundly two or three times, and a regular scrimage ensued.

Aunt Georgina flew to soothe her howling favorite, while the cat, who had jumped on to a neighboring cabinet, to the imminent peril of Margaret's collection of gimcrack pottery, glowed with angry green eyes at her cowardly assailant, her tail the size and consistency of a sweep's chimney brush.

It was none too soon! As I looked out of the window the men were just hoisting the table out of the cart.

"You keep her here," Margaret whispered hurriedly to me. "I must go and look after them, and tell them not to tread heavily." And she vanished from the room.

It is not too much to say that at this moment I was fairly terrified. If I failed, I was responsible to Margaret. I felt a violent desire to seize Aunt Georgina by the arm and march her up and down the room as they do a person who has swallowed a narcotic poison. A minute more and the men's feet were distinctly audible tramping past the drawing-room door. If my wife had told them not to tread heavily they were certainly not obeying her injunctions.

"Dear me!" said Aunt Georgina, putting up her eye-glass as if it enabled her to hear better. "You don't mean to say you have workmen in the house still?"

"I think it is some men come to look at the pipes," I replied. Pipes seem usually the things that workmen come to a house to look at, so I felt it was a safe thing to say, though not strictly true.

But Aunt Georgina seemed bent on investigating things for herself. In fact, her hand was already on the door, while a thrill of horror shot through me, when, fortunately, the door itself arrested her attention. Margaret who is an adept at painting on anything but paper, (that is to say, she paints on wood, china, terra-cotta and plush; but paper she says she can never manage) had spent some weeks in decorating the drawing-room doors, and the result was eminently charming.

"It's very well done, indeed—very well done," she said, peering through her glasses at my wife's artistic productions. "Those foxgloves seem growing up quite naturally out of the ground. By the way, where is Maggie gone to?" she exclaimed the next moment, sinking down on to a sofa which stood near.

"I—I think she has gone to look after the luncheon," I stammered. "You see, we are young house-keepers even yet." And I smiled a deathly smile. I caught a reflection of myself in the mirror opposite, and it seemed to me that I had absolutely aged since I had got up that morning. "My hair will be white soon," I thought, "if this sort of thing goes on much longer."

"Dear me!" said Aunt Georgina, suddenly starting up from her seat, and dropping the eye-glasses through which she had been steadfastly regarding me for some time, "While Maggie is busy why should you not show me all over the house? It will be a capital opportunity, and the stairs will give me an appetite for luncheon."

I groaned inwardly. I had been dreading that she would make this request all along.

"I am afraid there's nothing to see," I stammered lamely.

"Nothing to see!" echoed Aunt Georgina. "I conclude if there is nothing worth seeing in the rooms, there are the rooms themselves. Are you afraid of it's taking too long? I should think if, as you say, you do not possess a single spare room to offer a visitor, that is not likely."

This was said rather stingingly, and I felt that it required a decided answer of some kind. Another crisis had come. I screwed up my courage to the sticking point, though; like Macbeth, I felt that I was nothing without my wife.

"To tell you the truth, aunt," I began, in desperation; "I am afraid Margaret would not at all like my showing you over the house without her. Indeed, I am sure she would be awfully disappointed. She has been talking about your coming all the week," I went on, warming with my theme; "and looking forward to taking you all over the house and showing you the new furniture herself, and would be awfully cut up, I'm sure, if I were to play cicerone without her."

I felt my own man again after thus asserting myself, and Aunt Georgina at once looked mollified. It was a happy thought of mine.

I had still another *mauvais quart d'heure* before Margaret made her appearance, during which I industriously plied my charge with photograph albums and books of prints. As for the billiard table men, I thought they must have taken their departure up the chimney for I heard no more of them on the stairs.

Words fail me to express how delighted I was when the dear girl came back to relieve guard. I don't think she had ever made me so happy since the day she said she would be my wife. The luncheon bell rang very soon after, and as we were going down stairs she managed to whisper to me, while Aunt Georgina was attending to her pug, that the table was all right but the seats had not come.

"So I took the large armchair out of your dressing-room and one or two others to put against the walls, and the room looks all right and finished off. They've fixed the rack up, too, and it looks lovely. I made the men take off their shoes before they went down again. I told them some one was ill in the house."

"Margaret!" I said, reprovingly.

"It's all right," she replied; "the cook's got the toothache. There's no deception."

Our ordeal was over and we were safe. We had a most delightful luncheon. Aunt Georgina, who always enjoyed her food, thoroughly appreciated it, and I opened a bottle of my best champagne in her honor. She was in high good humor, and when afterwards we escorted her in triumph over our house, she did not turn up her nose at a single thing, not even at Margaret's many-colored early English bed-room candlesticks, which I owe I can never hold without a shudder.

Her one disparaging remark was made when, just as she was leaving the house, she turned round to my wife, who was standing in the hall, and said:

"Your house is absolutely perfection; the only drawback to it is that you have no spare-room."

DANIEL GILES shot George Terry dead at Hopkinsville, Ky., on account of jealousy.

FIRST WOMAN IN CAMP.

Rocky Mountain News.

Every miner in the camp was excited and talking about it. Now, it took some very important event to thoroughly arouse all the boys along the gulch. A row in which only one man was killed was considered a very commonplace social event, and an ordinary lynching did not attract much attention.

What was it?

Why, there was a woman in camp and all was commotion. It was the first great social event in White Horse Gulch.

The young lady had finished her dinner and was strolling about the camp with her uncle, a large, fleshy jolly old man, who was a large stockholder in one of the principal mines in the gulch. He had brought his niece, a young lady of 20, on a trip with him for company and also to show her something of the wild and rugged West. It had been many a month since the boys had seen a woman, and hence everybody wanted to meet her and invite her to partake of the hospitalities of White Horse Gulch, for all the latch strings were out and she would have been welcomed to the best the rude mountain cabins afforded.

Now, any woman would have appeared handsome. A dried-up old maid from New England, dieted and preserved on non-sugared tea for a quarter of a century, would have been considered handsome and very lovely, for the mountain boys are very gallant to women, and old maids are given a fair show every time.

The boys were all charmed by the polite manners and handsome face of the young lady, but there was a look of deep sympathy in the eyes of all when they saw her. "It is too bad," was the prevailing sentiment of all.

"What a handsome face, pard," exclaimed a miner to his friend, "but how unfortunate."

Some admired her handsome face, others her beautiful black hair, and others her comely-shaped foot, but all pitied her for her deformity.

That evening, after the young lady had retired, the uncle was chatting with a number of the miners, and his niece, of whom the fond uncle was very proud, became the topic of conversation. Finally, one hardier than the rest, said it was a pity she was deformed. In tones of sympathy he told the uncle how the hearts of all the men in White Horse Gulch had gone out toward him for her affliction.

"Afflicted!" shouted the enraged uncle. "Afflicted! Why, she is only wearing one of those blankety blank bustles." And everybody replied in a chorus:

"Bustle! Bustle! What's a bustle?"

WORDS, words, words!" says Hamlet, disparagingly. But God preserve us from the destructive power of words! There are words which can separate hearts sooner than sharp swords. There are words whose sting can remain through a whole life!

LET no man be sorry he has done good, because others concerned with him have done evil! If a man has acted right, he has done well, though alone; if wrong, the sanction of all mankind will not justify him.

MISS MARY YARNDELL, of Washington, Ind., committed suicide rather than marry a man whom she despised.